

A **RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY** took place in October to celebrate the successful completion and grand reopening of the Lyndale Avenue Bridge and interchange. The project, which was a partnership between local, state and federal agencies, was completed on schedule and represents a big step forward to improving traffic in the area.

“Bloomington appreciates the cost-sharing, cooperative effort in putting this much-needed Lyndale Avenue bridge project together,” Deputy Director of Public Works Jim Gates said.

The goal of the project, which began in fall 2008, was to provide additional traffic capacity and safety improvements needed along Lyndale Avenue and I-494. The construction crew's work involved reconstructing the Lyndale Avenue interchange into a new single-point diamond interchange that would accommodate future widening of I-494. The new bridge is similar in design to the Penn Avenue



From left: Richfield Councilmember Fred Wroge, Richfield Mayor Debbie Goettel, Bloomington Mayor Gene Winstead, United States Senator Amy Klobuchar and Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Tom Sorel.

Bridge. The reconstruction is the latest in ongoing improvements planned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) along the I-494 corridor in preparation for future I-35W upgrades.

The majority of the project was funded through federal assistance with contributions from MnDOT and the cities of Richfield and Bloomington.

By Mayor Gene Winstead

FOR AT LEAST the past two decades, the Mayors and Councilmembers who served our community have been dedicated to the long-term success of Bloomington, its residents and businesses. The City Council does this by balancing many competing interests across the community, providing good services at reasonable, competitive costs and finding ways to bring the community together. A key understanding behind these objectives is that the long-term property values of residential and business properties are directly related to a potential buyer's assessment of the attractiveness of the neighborhood and community. While we have a wide range of viewpoints that we bring to our work as a Council, our decisions are the result of our collective

desire to move the community forward. Although we may not agree on every issue, decisions are always based on what is best for Bloomington.

To demonstrate our efforts to move the community forward, tools such as the “monthly checkbook” are used in City publications to indicate the services you receive for your tax dollar. City taxes and key utility rates are also compared with other communities in Hennepin County with populations of more than 20,000.

The City of Bloomington, like other organizations, makes comparisons on the basis of the median market value of homes in each community. This method is used because the vast majority of property tax funded services are based on the fact that there is a residence on the property – the services are not based

on the value of that property. Comparing property tax costs on similar markets across communities does not give an accurate picture. Police and Fire send the same prevention and response services regardless of whether the property has a rambler or three-story walkout. Public Works provides the same amount of snow removal to a home on an 80-foot lot whether it is valued at \$200,000 or \$500,000. Parks Maintenance and Parks and Recreation services are a function of the people who use them and not related to property value. The annual cost of all property tax supported services is less than five-tenths of 1 percent of the average Bloomington home's value.

Continued on page 2.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON Attorney Dave Ornstein is retiring after 36 years with the City. Once named “Super Lawyer” by the *Minnesota Journal of Law and Politics*, his accomplishments range from representing the City during the Mall of America, IKEA and Bloomington Central Station developments to litigating challenges to ordinances prohibiting cigarette vending machines and smoking in public places.

For his work with the City, Ornstein has received the Distinguished Public Service Award from the International Municipal Lawyers Association and the Public Attorney Award of Excellence from the Minnesota Bar Association.



DECEMBER 2009

PAGE 2 Mayor's column continued.

PAGE 3 News you can use.

PAGE 4 Earth Action Heroes.

PAGE 5 People2People.

PAGE 6 Parks and recreation.

PAGE 7 Arts and community.

PAGE 8 Winter weather advisory.

**BRIEFING MAY BE FEATURED IN
FILM BONUS CONTENT**

THE CITY RECEIVED a request from Universal Pictures to feature a snapshot of a *Briefing* article in a piece about the making of Joel and Ethan Cohen's "A Serious Man" that was shot in Bloomington last summer and fall. The *Briefing* article, entitled "Bloomington makes its movie debut," was included in the December 2008 issue. The making-of-the-film piece will be included in the bonus content for the DVD version of the film.

TUMBLING ABOUT FUN WITH L'IL FLIPSTERS



L'IL FLIPSTERS GYMNASTICS is back. For children, ages 2 - 4 years, this mobile gymnastics organization is dedicated to providing the highest quality gymnastics training and motor skill development in a safe and fun environment. New sessions begin every month through May 2010. Classes are held at Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 West 98th Street, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, and Friday afternoons.

For more information, call Parks
and Recreation at 952-563-8877.



YOUTH WINTER SPORTS

YOUTH CAN STAY active and warm this winter by participating in Bloomington Athletic Association sports programs. For more information, visit www.baaonline.org.